

Dual Enrollment Task Force, Study, and Preliminary Survey Results

**P-16 Council
Agenda Item VI-A
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In 2000, the Council on Postsecondary Education revised its dual enrollment and dual credit policy for high school students from a fairly restrictive set of criteria (including student age, grade level, and grade point average) to a policy in which individual institutions and school districts may set their own agreements for accepting credit. Since then, as previously reported, total annual growth of dual enrollment in Kentucky over the past four academic years has increased dramatically, almost doubling from 9,321 to 18,291 between 2001-02 and 2003-04.

In 2004, the Kentucky Board of Education established a task force to examine access to and quality in dual credit programs. That task force, composed of members from local districts and postsecondary institutions, delivered initial findings and recommendations to the KBE in December. Several of the recommendations proposed actions that were within the authority of the Kentucky Department of Education and the KBE to address. Those action items became part of KBE's *Refocusing Secondary Agenda*. To address those issues requiring action beyond the authority of a single organization, KBE adopted a recommendation to "develop a comprehensive state level policy" to support access and quality in dual credit as a P-16 initiative.

At the 2005 National Association of System Heads annual meeting, representatives of several agencies and sectors across the Commonwealth identified dual enrollment (and the sub-set issue of dual credit) as a key area for statewide policy development. Consequently, at its September meeting, the State P-16 Council charged the staff with examining the state of dual enrollment and dual credit arrangements across the Commonwealth.

Dual Enrollment Study

As reported at the December P-16 Council meeting, the CPE is conducting a study of dual enrollment in Kentucky during 2001-05 using administrative enrollment data submitted as student- and course-unit records by public and independent postsecondary institutions to the CPE's Comprehensive Database. None of the data are self-reported by students; rather, the information is obtained through the institutions' admissions and registration processes. The study provides valuable information regarding dual enrollment course-taking patterns by student demographics, course-type, and sector of dual enrollment and subsequent college matriculation.

Preliminary results show that the Kentucky Community and Technical College System is the largest provider of dual enrollment courses and that the most common type of course taken by dually enrolled high school students are technical or occupational. Twenty percent of the students in the 2003-04 academic year chose to take academic courses, including those within the pre-college curriculum, and nearly 80 percent of the students that year received dual credit (high school as well as college). The study focused especially on the 2003-04 academic year

because this is the latest year for which the CPE has complete enrollment data that will allow an assessment of matriculation into regular college study.

The CPE continues to examine the effects of dual enrollment and dual credit on student achievement. Because Kentucky does not have a unified P-16 data system, the effect of participation of high school students in college course-taking on their high school performance and chances for high school graduation cannot be compared. However, correlations do exist with college matriculation and performance. Overall, 57 percent of students who dually enrolled in 2001-02 matriculated into postsecondary study within three years. Sixty-eight percent of students taking primarily academic courses matriculated by the following academic year—a figure that exceeds the overall college-going rate of Kentucky high school graduates (62 percent in 2002). The CPE is undertaking analysis of other factors affecting the role of dual enrollment and dual credit on student postsecondary success.

Dual Enrollment Survey

The CPE also administered a survey to the public and independent postsecondary institutions that provides valuable information on local practices and policies regarding dual enrollment and dual credit (see attachment). The Council staff asked the chief academic officers of the eight public four-year universities and the KCTCS to assign survey response to the most knowledgeable person on their campuses. The executive director of the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities was asked to disseminate the survey to Kentucky's independent institutions. All 16 KCTCS districts, seven public universities, and 11 independent institutions submitted responses. Two of those independent respondents specified that their institutions do not dually enroll high school students.

On the basis of the issues identified at the NASH annual meeting and during the September 2005 P-16 Council break-out session, the survey included questions addressing enrollment, recruitment, admissions criteria, types of course offerings, location and availability, credit value, instructor status and qualifications, and costs and funding. The following summarizes the preliminary results of the practices and concerns regarding dual enrollment and dual credit shared by the institutional respondents. Attention is paid to institutional sector, given their distinct patterns of response.

- **Enrollment:** Each of the KCTCS districts, five of the public universities, and one of the independents enroll more than 50 high school students per semester. Most of the remaining respondents enroll between one and 25 high school students per semester.
- **Recruitment:** More than half of the institutions in each sector enroll high school students on an individual basis. All of the KCTCS districts, four of the public universities, and four of the independent institutions report formal arrangements with local high schools. Nearly all of the respondents report recruitment of high school students for dual enrollment by their institution, by local high schools, or by both.

- **Eligibility Criteria:** Most of the respondents in all three sectors report admissions criteria based on a placement test, and several note that the academic requirements for dual enrollment are the same as those for regular students. Most restrict participation to high school students in their junior or senior year. Four of the public universities, two of the KCTCS districts, and four of the independents stipulate a grade point average criterion (most specifying 3.0). Several institutions require the recommendation of a school counselor or other high school official, while others note that admissions criteria vary by course and program. Thus, while the CPE removed many eligibility restrictions for dual credit at the state policy level, most institutions in practice retain some restrictions for high school student participation in dual enrollment, whether or not for college credit.
- **Course Offerings:** All institutions offering dual enrollment (with one exception) report providing academic courses for college credit. Not surprisingly, only the KCTCS districts offer vocational/technical courses for college credit. A small minority of the KCTCS and public universities offer remedial/developmental courses, which do not count as credit hours toward graduation. Four of the KCTCS districts and one of the public universities offer remedial/developmental courses for college credit.
- **Context, Availability, and Location:** Nearly all the respondents in all three sectors teach high school students in regular courses with college students (the chief exceptions are courses taught at Area Technology Centers). Most of the public institutions and three of the independents also offer separate sections for high school students. Nearly all the KCTCS districts and a minority of the other sectors make regular college courses available to high school students without regard to space or enrollment considerations, while space and enrollment pose a limitation for most of the public universities and the independents.

Nearly all postsecondary respondents report offering college courses to high school students on-campus (or at extended campus sites) and at the local high school. Several KCTCS institutions provide courses at local Area Technology Centers, and a few report online offerings.

- **Credit Value:** The majority of institutions of all sectors will grant college credit for a dual credit course taken at any Kentucky institution. Some identify limitations pertaining to program requirements, regional accreditation, content review, non-remedial status, and general transfer regulations.
- **Instructor Status and Qualifications:** All the KCTCS districts offer college credit courses to high school students taught by postsecondary faculty, high school teachers, or both. College credit courses are taught by postsecondary faculty at all the public and independent four-year institutions, with only two public and two independent institutions also offering college credit for courses taught by high school teachers.

The institutions were asked what they required as minimum qualifications for a high school teacher to teach a course for college credit. The majority of institutions in all three sectors require a doctorate or a master's degree in the area of instruction that includes 18 graduate semester hours in the discipline. (This is a Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

guideline for teaching undergraduate courses in baccalaureate programs or in associate programs designed to transfer to baccalaureate programs.) Nearly all the KCTCS districts (and one independent institution) require a bachelor's or an associate degree in the area of instruction and demonstrated competence in teaching the discipline as a minimum qualification (a SACS guideline for teaching undergraduate courses *not* designed for transfer to a baccalaureate program). Two institutions in each sector required a master's degree in the area of instruction that includes 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline (a SACS guideline for graduate students teaching under faculty supervision). Ashland Community and Technical College allows a vocational teaching certificate to qualify an instructor for dual credit technical courses. The University of Kentucky permits only its faculty or staff to teach dual credit courses.

Nearly half of the KCTCS districts (and the University of the Cumberlands) report that their faculty are fully certified to teach high school students. Five KCTCS (and one public and independent each) obtain emergency certification status for their faculty. The majority of the rest require good institutional standing or no special qualifications for faculty teaching high school students.

- **Cost and Funding:** In-state tuition per credit hour for a high school student costs \$98 at all KCTCS districts. Credit hour costs range from \$147-\$232 at public universities and \$100-\$830 at the independents. The institutions vary widely in their policies for applying costs to dual enrollment students. A majority of the KCTCS institutions and a third of the public universities charge full tuition for high school students. All responding independents and fewer than half of the public institutions reduce tuition charges (with costs again ranging from below \$40 to over \$400 per credit hour). A majority of the two-year institutions and two of the four-year public universities waive tuition altogether under particular circumstances.

At all but one of the institutions offering dual credit courses, tuition costs are borne by the student or the student's family, with four institutions reporting some contribution by school districts. Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funds play a role for several KCTCS districts. Community grants and institutional scholarships are provided at six institutions.

In addition, the high school student or his or her family is responsible for books, fees, and other costs at all responding institutions offering dual credit options. Nearly all KCTCS districts (and Western Kentucky University) report some contributions made by school districts, and several public institutions report support by SEEK funds, other state scholarships, GEAR UP, and community sources.

- **Academic Support and Staff:** Nearly half of all the institutions report having no staff specifically dedicated to administering dual enrollment programs or to advising students. Of the remaining, 11 report fewer than one staff dedicated to this purpose, and the rest report from one to fewer than three staff. Institutions responding to an open-ended inquiry regarding specialized academic support for high school dual enrollers identified services

normally provided to regular students, such as the library, COMPASS-testing, remediation, academic advising, the computer lab, and online instruction.

- **Chief Obstacles to Offering College Courses to High School Students:** The chief obstacle was the lack of available, interested instructors. Postsecondary faculty are not normally certified for secondary school teaching, and most high school teachers do not meet SACS accreditation standards. The cost of tuition and books and lack of financial aid were the next more frequently noted challenge. Some institutions cited waiving tuition as a disincentive for offering dual enrollment courses. Logistical difficulties, such as transportation (of both students to campuses and faculty to high schools) and course scheduling also were highlighted. KCTCS institutions identified the absence of statewide standards for these programs as a challenge, and the University of Kentucky saw lack of high school and college outcome measures as an obstacle.

Selected Findings from the Kentucky Board of Education Task Force

The Dual Enrollment Study and Dual Enrollment Survey summarized above contain findings from the postsecondary sector. The K-12 perspective on many of these issues is reflected in findings from the 2004 task force, some of which are highlighted below. While many issues have been addressed in whole or in part by recent KBE actions, they are of interest in light of the results of the CPE study and survey and the P-16 Council's next steps:

- Eliminate any issues or perceived issues that impede the enrollment of students in full-day collegiate programs.
- Eliminate questions pertaining to the certification of faculty at the college level to teach high school students. Additionally, find ways to encourage more high school teachers to meet SACS requirements enabling them to teach courses at the college level.
- Consider the adoption of standards, such as those used by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships, for best practices in teaching college-level courses on high school (or ATC) campuses.
- Establish a long-term plan to enable student placement in dual credit courses to be tied to competencies earned in high school coursework or on high school assessments.
- Promote alignment of standards, such as those developed in the American Diploma Project.
- In the work of aligning curriculum and assessments, consider the adoption of early diagnostic tools, such as those advocated in the McCabe Bridge Project, to enable students early in high school to understand how they are progressing toward college-level competencies.
- Adopt a unique student identification system to track students from the P-12 system to the postsecondary system.
- Determine how the Go Higher Web portal and the Individual Graduation Plan can aid the tracking and advising of these students as they matriculate from one system to the other.
- Consider the development of a uniform process for appropriate documentation of dual credit/dual enrollment courses on the high school transcript, such as common course codes.
- Create a host of affordable options for students to take dual credit courses that transcend time and place (virtual).

- Begin an open dialogue with short-term and long-term solutions to address funding/tuition issues, particularly for low-income students. Discussions on funding options and restructuring of the funding formula, including policy makers in P-12 and postsecondary, should focus on providing a fair and equitable option, tied closely to student needs and interests. An example may include a model currently under discussion that provides two levels of funding for secondary students, one for those meeting “core requirements” and a level for those in the “post core.” “Post core” funds could be used for dual credit or other alternative educational opportunities in the later part of the high school experience.

The KBE continues to raise questions about how the state will assess and ensure the rigor of dual credit course offerings. That item will be a topic of discussion at the April KBE meeting.

Selected Findings from National Research

Research is growing on various states’ implementation of dual enrollment of high school students. What has been published, however, suggests that several of the pattern variations by sector observed among Kentucky’s institutions reflect national patterns. A 2005 study of 1,600 institutions conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, for example, found that:

- Dual enrollment opportunities are most prevalent among public two-year institutions, followed by larger four-year institutions.
- Smaller, independent colleges are less likely to have dually enrolled high school students and enrolled them in lower numbers.
- Placement tests are the most commonly used criterion for academic eligibility.
- Four-year institutions (public and independent) are more likely to stipulate minimum GPA’s.
- Students and their parents bear the cost of tuition and other expenses in the majority of institutions. Public four-year institutions are more likely to charge full tuition than public two-year institutions or independent institutions.
- Independent institutions are least likely to rely on funding from school districts or the state and most likely among the sectors to reduce or waive tuition or to use institutional scholarships for high school students.
- Most institutions report that the minimum qualifications for high school instructors teaching courses for college credit are the same as those for college instructors. Fewer independent institutions than two- or four-year public institutions offer dual enrollment options in the high schools themselves.

The perceived benefits of dual enrollment or dual credit, however, as one U.S. Department of Education study notes, are not yet supported by evaluation research. Even more recent reports remain focused on policy description rather than study of impact. For this reason, Kentucky’s study of the effects of participation in dual enrollment and dual credit is valuable as the P-16 Council considers state-level policy development in this area.

Initial Policy Questions

Given the results of this research, the following are among the policy issues that the P-16 Council may wish to consider:

- Should a consistent, statewide tuition policy be established for dual enrollment or dual credit course-taking?
- Should a consistent, statewide financial aid policy be established to guarantee equal access for college course-taking opportunities?
- Is it in the interest of the state's agenda to raise the level of educational attainment and workplace readiness to limit state funding of college courses taken by high school students to those that correlate most directly to postsecondary enrollment and persistence?
- Should a study be conducted of employment patterns of high school students taking technical/vocational courses to determine if employability and career mobility are enhanced by early workplace certification or whether short-term gains are offset by longer-term limitation of career mobility?
- Should a teaching certification policy be adopted specifically for postsecondary faculty teaching high school students?
- Should the partner agencies of the P-16 Council work to align academic calendars and daily scheduling to facilitate college course-taking opportunities for high school students?